

Smoke Detectors Could Save Your Life!



Why a Smoke Detector?

Most fires occur at night when people are sleeping. A smoke detector can alert you when there is a fire, in time to save your life. Smoke detectors work by sensing rising smoke from a fire and sounding an alarm.

What Type Should I Buy?

1. Photoelectric uses a photoelectric bulb that sends forth a beam of light. When smoke enters, light from the beam is reflected from smoke particles into a photocell and the alarm is triggered.
2. Ionization Chamber contains a small, safe radiation chamber source that produces electrically charged air molecules called ions. When smoke enters the chamber, it causes a change in the flow of ions, triggering the alarm.

Both are EQUALLY EFFECTIVE and neither requires that you be familiar with its inner workings. As long as you buy a detector that is tested by a major testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), you can be assured it has met certain testing requirements.

Where Should I Install My Detector?

Smoke rises, so the best place to install a detector is on the ceiling or high on an inside wall just below the ceiling. If the detector is below an un-insulated attic or in a mobile home, the detector should be placed on the wall 4" - 12" below the ceiling.



In a Multi-level home, a detector is needed on each level. On the first floor it should be placed on the ceiling at the base of the stairwell.

Detectors should be installed within 15 feet of the bedrooms so they can be heard when the door is closed. But, remember not to install a detector within 3 feet of an air supply register that may blow smoke away. Don't install a detector between an air return and the sleeping area. The smoke will be re-circulated and diluted resulting in a delayed alarm.

If you are installing more than one detector you may want to consider purchasing units that can be interconnected. That way when one unit detects smoke, all the detectors will sound the alarm.

Winchester Fire and Rescue Department

How Are Detectors Powered? Detectors can be powered two ways:

1. **Batteries**

These are the easiest to install. They require no outlets or wiring connection, however, batteries must be replaced twice a year. We recommend you change them in the spring and in the fall when you change your clocks. All UL listed battery operated detectors are required to sound a trouble signal when a replacement is needed. The signal usually lasts 7 days, so it's advised to check the efficiency of the detector following extended periods away.

2. **Household current**

Detectors can be powered with household current two ways. They can be plugged into any wall socket or can be wired permanently into your home's electrical system.

How Can I Best Care for My Detector? Dirt, extreme changes in temperature and cooking exhaust can cause a false alarm or malfunction of the detector. To prevent false alarms, locate the detector away from air vents, air conditioners and fans. Keep the grillwork free of dirt by occasional vacuuming and dusting. Don't paint the cover of a smoke detector as this may clog the grillwork. Test your detector every month, or more often if necessary to make sure it's working. This is usually done with the test button, if provided.